

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

September 10, 2004

The Honorable George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Bush:

Governor Mike Easley has submitted a request for a major disaster declaration for the State of North Carolina following the severe impact of Hurricane Frances on our state. We write to endorse this request and seek your favorable consideration of it.


Governor Easley requested Individual Assistance for fifteen counties: Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Transylvania, Watauga and Yancey. The Governor also requested Hazard Mitigation for the entire state. All of the impacted counties are in our Congressional Districts.

We have been informed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that its staff will begin the Damage Assessment on Monday, September 13. Preliminary estimates indicate the damage will easily exceed the minimum damage threshold for Federal Disaster Assistance. Many of these counties also have suffered serious economic dislocation in the last three years as traditional manufacturing industries have closed their doors forever. Hurricane Frances took a heavy toll on the roads and water treatment facilities in these counties, further compounding the financial burden placed on local governments to meet the citizens' needs.

We are requesting your assistance to ensure that FEMA completes its damage assessment in a timely manner so that you may issue the expedited major disaster declaration, making federal disaster funds readily available to assist these counties and the State of North Carolina in recovering from Hurricane Frances. Thank you for your support of our constituents during this difficult period.

Sincerely,


CASS BALLENGER
Member of Congress


CHARLES TAYLOR
Member of Congress


RICHARD BURR
Member of Congress